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Lessening our dependence on foreign oil was again a hot topic in the 10th Congressional District, as incumbent U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk on Wednesday introduced an energy advisory board.

Comprised of about two dozen members with expertise in areas such as research, alternative fuels, vehicles, and wind and solar energy, the advisory group is part of a push for energy independence, according to Kirk.

Kirk said feedback from the group will be used to push for policies to help families deal with rising costs and make inroads in producing renewable energy, alternative fuels and vehicles, and energy efficiency, for example.

"The American people already get it. You can see what's happened to auto sales and you can see what's happening with hybrid sales," Kirk said during the inaugural meeting at Siemens Building Technologies Inc. in Buffalo Grove.

Kirk says he is usually concise but his recently introduced Apollo Energy Independence Act had a lot of ground to cover.

"It took 150 pages to change all the policy necessary," to provide for a "comprehensive solution" to energy issues. The \$23 billion initiative would provide market incentives in a variety of areas and dramatically reduce the consumption of foreign oil by 2030, he added.

Offshore oil exploration and nuclear energy would be part of Kirk's plan.

This article was edited to comply with Franking Commission guidelines.